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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

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The Message of the East

JANUARY 1918

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE VALUE OF NON-ATTACHMENT.

By Swami Paramananda.

Serenity of heart is attained when all the blemishes are wiped out of our nature through the subjugation of self. Only when we have succeeded in eliminating all worldly impressions and no longer allow our mind to cling to the non-essential, can we attain perfect tranquillity; and we do this through the practice of non-attachment. For this reason non-attachment forms one of the most vital factors in our spiritual path. In order to gain it people subject themselves to rigid austerities and sacrifices. But these do not always lead to detachment. Often we find as much attachment in a beggar as in a prince. It is not a question of many possessions or few. Non-attachment is a quality of mind and has very little to do with external conditions. Through a momentary impulse due to unhappy circumstances we may tear ourselves away from our association and environment; but even by doing this, we are not able to break the tie which binds us to them. The outer renunciation of earthly things does not liberate us from the hold they have upon our mind.

We usually imagine that we feel attachment only for what is pleasing to us, but in reality aversion binds us as much as desire. It is sometimes even more difficult to

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free ourselves from unpleasant impressions than from pleasant ones. There are certain blunders, hasty words, unworthy acts, which leave a bad taste in our memory and we would like to forget them; but we seem powerless to do so, because our mind stubbornly clings to them. Often, too, we recognize something plainly detrimental to our progress, yet we are unable to drive it out of our thought. Another mistake we frequently make is to suppose that there cannot be any true love without strong attachment. In reality, however, they are totally different in nature and produce contrary results on our character. Attachment contracts, love expands. Attachment calls out all the baser selfish instincts. We are attached because of the gratification it brings us, with only a secondary thought for the happiness and well-being of the one to whom we are attached. Love, on the other hand, makes us absolutely forgetful of our own self-interest or satisfaction and thinks only of the loved one. It gives perfect freedom, while attachment creates slavery both for us and for the one to whom we bear attachment. Love gives for the joy of giving, attachment gives for the return that may come.

Those who have a perfect understanding of the spiritual life declare that attachment in any form is a great drawback; and if we wish to advance in the spiritual path, we must practise non-attachment towards all these worldly impressions, associations and possessions, to which at present we cling through sheer force of habit. By this, however, is meant an inner practice rather than an outer act of renunciation. It is a question of creating new impressions in the mind. If our present impressions have proved unsatisfactory and hostile to our progress, then we must take a stand against them. We do this and no more. We must not fight them, but we must go to work and create a totally new set of impressions.

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The ego is our greatest enemy in accomplishing this. It constantly produces delusion in our mind. Yet if it is helpful to us, we do not want to destroy it. What we want is to reshape it. We want a better form of ego. This is the idea of all discipline. The only way we can conquer this subtle force is to hold ourselves as the witness. If we can imagine standing on the bank of a river, seeing the water flow by, so we should watch all impressions pass without being disturbed by them. The ordinary tendency is when someone strikes, to strike back; but this is not the case with a masterful mind. It is not that he lacks in sensibility, but these things do not move him; he has, as it were, put on an armor of fortitude and calmness.

The practice of detachment includes two distinct processes, — withdrawing and indrawing. We must withdraw ourselves from whatever retards our unfoldment; then create a strong new spiritual impression by turning our thought within. At present we are all slaves to certain habits; in order to overcome these we must cultivate another habit, which in time will become so dominant that it will efface the old ones. All our out-going tendencies, which now hold us back, must be detached from the non-essential and then drawn inward. But this is only possible through superior knowledge. If we try to do violence to our mind by a sudden uprooting of the old impressions, it suffers; but if we first acquire a correct knowledge of the relative value of things, the mind itself lets go without any pang. First we analyze, discriminate and try to see everything in its true light; then as the mind gradually detaches itself from the old impression, we turn it inward and fix it on some spiritual object. As we do this, our heart becomes more and more liberated from mundane things and finds its sole delight in God.

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HYMN OF PRAISE.

From the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Salutation to that Adorable One Who endows all beings with consciousness; Who is the Soul of the Universe; Who constitutes the germ of all creation and Who is the Supreme Lord. Let us meditate upon Him.

I take refuge with that self-created One, in Whom is established this (universe); from Whom it has sprung; by Whom it was created; and Who is the basis of it, yet Who is not bound by cause and effect.

Salutation unto the Highest Lord; unto Brahman, the Supreme; unto Him of infinite power; Who is without form, yet Who wears countless forms; and unto Him of wondrous works.

Salutation unto Him, Who is the Light and Guide of the Soul, the Witness, the Supreme Spirit.

Salutation unto Him, Who is the ever-peaceful one; Whose acts are law, Who is without any shadow of difference, Who is ever the same, Who is Supreme Intelligence.

Salutation unto Thee, Who art the Soul of all, the Sovereign Ruler of all, the Witness, the Great Self, the Origin of Souls, and the Source of Nature herself.

Salutation unto Thee, who art the Cause of all, yet Thyself causeless; Who art the Source of the Vedas (Scriptures), the Mighty Ocean, the Bestower of emancipation, and the Great Refuge of all creatures.

Salutation unto Thee, Who severest the yoke of ignorance of such humble devotees as myself; from Whom cometh liberation; the Fountain of unlimited mercy, Who art never idle; Who art the inner-Soul within the hearts of all, directing their thoughts and actions in accordance with their Karma.

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Salutation unto Thee, the might of Whose threefold Divine force is irresistible; Who dost manifest Thyself as the form of sense objects; the Protector of all who take refuge in Thee; of transcendental power and glory; Whose way is unattainable by those who are bent upon the enjoyment of worldly pleasures.

WHAT IS THIS WORLD?

By Ali Ghazzali.

(Persian moralist and philosopher, 11th century.)

This world is a stage or market-place passed by pilgrims on their way to the next. It is here that they are to provide themselves with provisions for the way; or, to put it plainly, man acquires here by the use of his bodily senses some knowledge of the works of God and through them of God Himself, the sight of Whom will constitute his future beatitude. It is for the acquirement of this knowledge that the spirit of man has descended into this world of water and clay.

While man is in this world, two things are necessary for him:—First, the protection and nurture of his Soul; secondly, the care and nurture of his body. The proper nourishment of the Soul, as above shown, is the knowledge and love of God; and to be absorbed in the love of anything but God is the ruin of the Soul. The body, so to speak, is simply the riding animal of the Soul and perishes, while the Soul endures. The Soul should take care of the body, just as a pilgrim on his way to Mecca takes care of his camel; but if the pilgrim spends his whole time in feeding and adorning his camel, the caravan will leave him behind and he will perish in the desert.

Man's bodily needs are simple, being comprised under three heads,—food, clothing and a dwelling-place; but the bodily desires, which are implanted in him with a view to

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procuring these, are apt to rebel against reason, which is of later growth than they. Accordingly, as we saw above, they require to be curbed and restrained by the Divine laws promulgated by the prophets.

The occupations and businesses of the world have become more and more complicated and troublesome chiefly owing to the fact that men have forgotten that their real necessities are only three — clothing, food and shelter; and that these exist only with the object of making the body a fit vehicle for the Soul in its journey towards the next world. They have fallen into the same mistake as the pilgrim to Mecca, mentioned above, who, forgetting the object of his pilgrimage and himself, should spend his whole time in feeding and adorning his camel. The deceitful character of the world comes out in the following ways. In the first place it pretends that it will always remain with you, while as a matter of fact it is slipping away from you moment by moment and bidding you farewell, like a shadow which seems stationary but is actually always moving.

Another dangerous property of worldly things is that they at first appear as mere trifles, but each of these so-called "trifles" branches out into countless ramifications, until they swallow up the whole of a man's time and energy. Jesus (on whom be peace!) said: "The lover of the world is like a man drinking sea-water; the more he drinks the more thirsty he gets, till at last he perishes with thirst unquenched." The Prophet said: "You can no more mix with the world without being contaminated by it, than you can go into water without getting wet."

The world is like a table spread for successive relays of guests who come and go. There are gold and silver dishes, abundance of food and perfumes. The wise guest eats as much as is sufficient for him, smells the perfumes, thanks

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his host, and departs. The foolish guest, on the other hand, tries to carry off some of the gold and silver dishes, only to find them wrenched out of his hands and himself thrust forth, disappointed and disgraced.

Although we have said so much against the world, it must be remembered that there are some things in the world which are not *of* it, such as knowledge and good deeds. A man carries what knowledge he possesses with him into the next world; and though his good deeds have passed, yet the effect of them remains in his character. Especially is this the case with acts of devotion, which result in the perpetual remembrance and love of God. These are among "those good things" which, as the Koran says, "pass not away."

THE SECRET OF RIGHT ACTIVITY.

Lecture by Sister Devamata.

As we watch the endless multiplication of machines and all the intricate apparatus of modern life, we see that in nearly every case the aim is to save labor. Man's ambition apparently is to invent a machine that will live for him, work for him, earn for him, while he sits by and merely turns a lever or pushes a button. Curiously enough, however, while he is thus intent on saving labor, he never thinks of saving life itself. For every hour spared in physical effort, he is increasing his needs, whetting his desires, accelerating the momentum of his daily living, over-reaching himself in countless ways, and as the harvest of it all reaping disappointment and exhaustion. If he could apply the same ingenuity and power of invention to the bigger problem of life, instead of to bodily activity only, he would save labor not only for a few hours in the day, but for eternity. It was to teach man this secret that those Seers of old, seated in seeming inaction on the heights of the Hima-

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layas, evolved the practical system of Karma-Yoga or the science of right activity. How can man make each action bring its full equivalent? How can he perform each task with a minimum loss of energy? These were the questions for which they sought and found answers.

There can be no such thing as inactivity on the plane of manifestation, they taught. Activity may become gross or fine, it may be outer or inner; but living itself means action. The heart never stops, or the lungs; all the subconscious forces of our body are ceaselessly active. It is evident then that as human beings we have no choice between action and inaction; we may only determine the nature of our activity. Proper direction and conservation of energy become therefore the two primary lessons of life. Man should economize his inner forces as carefully as he seeks to save steam or electricity. Wise living is at bottom a problem in mechanics,— how to prevent waste and to reduce friction. Are we trying to make our life move with less and less friction? Are we utilizing every ounce of energy to some vital end? By such questionings should we challenge each rising impulse towards action.

At present we live in the comparative degree:—Is this better or wiser or higher? We should go a step further and live in the superlative:—Is this best, wisest, highest? There is a "best" at every moment:—a best way to wake up and to fall asleep, a best way to work, a best way to play, a best way to expend each hour of living. If we wake heavy, drowsy, longing for more sleep, we begin the day with the sub-conscious or lower brute self uppermost. We should train ourselves, by holding the proper thought as we fall asleep at night, to waken with the feeling of the privilege of life, the privilege of work, the wealth of the hours before us. As soon as we form the habit of waking in this attitude of

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mind, we shall rise alert, strong, rested. So with each act of life; it must seem a privilege, rich in opportunity for higher attainment and service. Then there will be no division in our thought, hence no fricton or waste.

In our present scattered, nervous way of living, we expend at least fifty per cent more energy in every act than we need. The course of our day is not unlike that of a dog along a country road. In one mile he covers three, because he has no direct purpose in his zigzag search. We must learn to make straight across our day by having a single purpose in our mind. Perfect single-mindedness implies a dominant aim in life; but it also means that we should try to hold our entire thought on the task in hand, never letting it wander to what has gone before or to what is coming after. This is the secret of all efficiency — one thing at a time. Watch any great man at work and you will see how absolutely his energy is centred on what he is doing; it is almost impossible to divert his attention. The average thought is seldom fixed; it runs back and forth across the main line of activity. Is the task pleasant or unpleasant? Will it succeed or fail? Is it worth while? So it calculates and measures and questions and wastes energy; for every useless thought means leakage and decrease of power. The wise man cares little about the nature of his work; for him there is no difference between task and task, one is not irksome and another agreeable; he is wholly concerned with the force which works — that it may be used to the greatest possible advantage and to the largest end.

The quickest way to arrive at this point of view, Vedanta says, is to detach our mind from all anxiety regarding the results of our action. In nothing do we spend so much futile energy as in calculating, while we work, the outcome of

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our effort. By that divided line of thought we inevitably reduce the result; and the more we waste energy in calculating, the smaller must it be. If a man stops every little while to measure the amount of ground he has covered, it will take him long to make his journey. We should put the whole of ourself into our work and let the result take care of itself. There is no surer method of gaining the largest result. It is not possible for any effort to be fruitless, for there can be no action without a reaction of equal strength and similar nature. The more centred the act, therefore, the stronger and more productive must be the reaction. Even should it fall short of our hopes, we shall spare ourselves needless suffering and regret if we keep our attention fixed on what we put into each act rather than on what we get out of it. Every disappointment borne cheerfully means so much energy saved for a future and more effective action. Life is like any other game; if a man plays, not to play well, but to win, he nearly always grows irritable and loses both his temper and the game. The good player maintains his poise under all circumstances and is intent only on the perfection of each stroke. The Gita teaches us this when it tells us that the first lesson in Yoga or spiritual practice is even-mindedness; and the second is skillfulness in action.

Not one of us is really weak, not one is incapable of great results in life. We do not know ourselves—what dynamos of power we are; what mighty things we might achieve, if we would only gather up all our energies and make the wisest use of them. We can do this only as we readjust our scale of values and put them on a sounder basis. Now we squander our vital forces because we lend importance to trivial things, which fail us as soon as we gain them, and then we must begin again. Also we imagine that our hap-

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piness and greatness rest on outer circumstances and we strain every nerve to alter them. But what matters it if we are here or there? As soon as we enlarge our standard of measurement, it will not count at all. One spot or another, it is all on the same earth, revolving about the same sun, part of the same universe, governed by the same laws.

What differentiates man from man then? His own will. And what makes the difference between will and will? The Ideal and the faith with which it is served. That is all. Get a high Ideal and relate yourself to it, at once your will will grow stronger. If we try to run our little machine as an isolated mechanism, it will run down every few moments; but if we keep it connected with the power centre, it becomes inexhaustible; and it is by our thought that we connect ourselves. It is not the size of a machine that is of first importance; it is the perfection of its adjustment and the skill with which it is directed. People used to think that a big tree needed a big saw; now they have discovered that a fine saw moved at high speed cuts better. It is not a question of whether we have great gifts or small, whether we are in a place of importance or an obscure corner; it is a question of moving steadily, calmly, with fixed determination towards a lofty goal. When we can do this, our life must be fruitful for ourself and for the world.

Let us realize our possibilities and begin to develop them. It requires no special equipment, no peculiar set of circumstances. Every man must act. We cannot help it. We cannot stop it. "Not even for a moment does anyone remain inactive," the Bhagavad-Gita declares. Such being the case, how can we make this activity count? Now we are the slaves of action, let us learn to be masters. Wherever and whatever we may be, let us set out from this day to be the finest sort of person we can be and lead the highest

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kind of life. Nobility of character needs no external name or condition to ennoble it. Let the humblest man serve a lofty Ideal with steadfast devotion and he glorifies himself and his condition. The secret is less in what we do or what we are, than in what we serve. Is God the pivot of every action? Then we are safe. We cannot work to small ends. That Power which keeps the earth moving round the sun and that again round a bigger sun, will keep us too swinging in our proper orbit in harmony with the universal plan.

We only live and breathe and act because we are connected with the Ultimate Source of life and action. Apart from it we are as helpless as are the great wheels in a power-house when the engine stops. But as every bolt and belt and piston is necessary to that engine; so have we a vital part in the universal scheme; and we shall fulfill that part only when we remain in constant union with the Central Power. Now we refer all things to our little self; we must learn to refer all things to Him. Every thought of petty personal gain or loss, pleasure or pain, honor or dishonor, must be swallowed up in the consuming thought of God. Whatever leads us towards Him will be accounted gain, even though it rob us of every worldly advantage; whatever takes us from Him will be a loss, though it set us in the highest place. Nor will our life grow less joyous when we adopt this new standard of action. When we walk towards the sun, all is radiance; it is only when we turn away that we see our shadow. The man who faces towards God as he works, as he plays, as he rests, is always glad-hearted, whatever the day's labor may bring him; and only the happy-hearted man does his work well.

Discontent, envy, doubt, selfish ambition, these are the causes of all friction and waste; and they can be eradicated

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only by broadening our vision. We must regard ourselves not as isolated entities living a little life of our own, but as parts of a great whole with a universal mission. No ambition we can hold for ourselves can be so far-reaching as that which God holds for us. We merely limit our possibilities for achievement whenever we set a definite end for our action. When we shall learn on the contrary to yield ourselves up to His larger plan, then the beauty that is the sunset or the sunrise, the strength that is in the wind, the love that is in a Christ's heart, the wisdom that keeps all created things moving in perfect order and harmony, each according to its nature and purpose: these will manifest through us and we shall become mighty channels through which the Infinite will accomplish His perfect work.

THE SUPERIOR MAN.

Texts of Confucianism.

The superior man, acting in accordance with the state of equilibrium and harmony, may be all unknown and unregarded by the world, but he feels no regret.

The way of the superior man reaches far and wide, and yet is secret.

That wherein the superior man cannot be equalled is simply this,—his (work) which other men do not see. Therefore the superior man, even when he is not acting, has the feeling of reverence; and when he does not speak, he has the feeling of truthfulness.

A superior man keeps his speech under control, while the small man is forward to speak.

The superior man exalts others and abases himself; he gives the first place to others and takes the last himself.

The superior man will decline a position of high honor, but not one that is lowly; and riches, but not poverty.

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Hence the superior man, rather than have his emoluments superior to his worth, will have his worth superior to his emoluments.

The superior man does what is proper to the position in which he is, he does not want to go beyond it. In a position of wealth and honor, he does what is proper to a position of wealth and honor. In a position of poverty and lowliness, he does what is proper to a position of poverty and lowliness. The superior man can find himself in no position in which he is not himself.

In a high situation he does not insult or oppress those who are below him; in a low position he does not cling to or depend on those who are above him. He rectifies himself and seeks for nothing from others; and thus none feel dissatisfied with him. Above, he does not murmur against Heaven; below, he does not find fault with men. When occupying a high position he is not proud, and in a low position he is not insubordinate.

Therefore the superior man lives quietly and calmly, waiting for the appointments of Heaven; while the ordinary man does what is full of risk, looking out for the turns of luck.

The Master said: "In archery we have something like the way of the superior man. When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of the failure in himself."

The superior man internally examines his heart, that there may be nothing wrong there and no occasion for dissatisfaction with himself.

The course of the superior man is rooted in his own character and conduct.

The superior man considers perfection as the noblest of all attainments. He who is perfect not only completes

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himself, his perfection enables him to complete all other beings also. The completion of himself shows the complete virtue of his nature, the completion of other beings shows his wisdom.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF WAR IN ANCIENT INDIA.

By Prof. Bal Krishna, M. A., F. S. S.

What about the morality of war in the civilized nations of the ancient world? Civilized China, Egypt, Carthage, Persia, Greece, Rome and Assyria show no more humanity and morality in their palmy days than uncivilized Europe in the dark Mediaeval Ages. From the Homeric age down to the Roman conquest of Greece there is one horrible story to be told in this respect. Guile, treachery, cunning, falsehood, relentless cruelty, unrestrained ferocity, extreme brutality, inhuman barbarity; indiscriminate pillage, slaughter and conflagation; in short, savagery and vandalism were the morality of the day. Then the whole Roman Empire was actually watered with the blood of the martyrs and captives of war. Slavery was the foundation of both civilizations. Without this institution, so eloquently defended by that great philosopher, Aristotle, the Greek and Roman civilizations could never have seen the light of day. But is there anything of the kind to be found in ancient India?

It can be said on the unimpeachable authority of the Greek historians themselves that we made no captives in war, nor had any slaves, native or foreign, in our midst. Magasthenes, Arrian and Strabo have all testified to the truth of this assertion. Then in India belligerents had no license to ruthlessly butcher one another and win victories by every means, fair and foul; but they had to observe

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many restrictions which did not allow them to transgress the bounds of morality, sympathy or humanity. War was looked upon as a contest of arms for securing peace, justice or redress of grievances; although a necessary evil, it was humanized. Cunning, treachery, unnecessary pain were against the rules of a fair warfare. Hence the fighting armies were prohibited by the great primeval law-giver and the first patriarch, Manu, to employ (a) weapons concealed in wood for treacherously killing the foe; (b) barbed arms; (c) poisoned arms; (d) weapons whose points were blazing with fire.

But it can be said that the present redaction of the Manava-Dharma-Shastra is not very old. It does not carry us far enough into the realms of antiquity. Justly so; let us go to the Sutra period. There, curiously enough, we find the same thing recorded in the Baudhayana Sutras. Thus this passage is not only a valuable historic proof of the prohibition, but also of the previous existence of poisoned arms and of fire-arms among the Indians of the 5th century B. C. Stranger still that an outright condemnation of poisoned arms is to be seen in the Ramayana. Meghnad is charged with the violation of the rules of fair fighting when he threw his poisoned javelin at Laksmana. It should be noted, however, that the use of guns, cannons and other machines was not against the rules of just warfare. Sukra has given instructions for their employment. "One should commence fighting," he says, "by placing fire-arms, both light and heavy, in the front; but the war with mechanical instruments leads to great destruction in which balls are flung by the application of gunpowder in cylindrical fire-arms."

"Persons equally circumstanced must encounter each other, fighting fairly. A car warrior should have a car-

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warrior for his antagonist; he on the neck of an elephant should have a similar combatant for a foe; a horse should be met by a horse; and a foot soldier, O Bharata, should be met by a foot soldier. Guided by considerations of fitness, willingness, daring and might, one should strike another, giving notice. No one should strike another that is unprepared, or panic-stricken. One engaged with another, one seeking quarter, one retreating, one whose weapon is rendered unfit, one uncased in mail should never be struck. Car-drivers, animals (yoked to cars or carrying weapons), men engaged in the transport of weapons, players on drums and blowers of conchs should never be struck." Such are the highly interesting covenants made by the Kurus and Pandavas (at least 1400 B. C.). They reveal a very high degree of civilization, a deep regard for humanity and a laudable spirit of fair fighting. The Hague Conferences have not yet agreed to embody such humane regulations in their military codes. But here an important question crops up — whether the above rules were ever observed in actual practice? Certain rules were occasionally violated in the great Kurukshetra war, but every such occasion provokes an indignant condemnation from all the leaders.

Pillage and capricious demolishment of buildings were altogether prohibited. The whole unfighting population was to be religiously spared and promises of safety were to be proclaimed by various means. The victor was to inspire confidence among the conquered, declaring that he would protect them like his children, that they were like his own subjects. The conqueror was to find out the best means of gratifying his subjects. He was to win over the educated classes by honoring the righteous Brahmins; by worshipping the gods and lightening the taxes of the peo-

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ple; by making authoritative their customs, laws and family practices; and finally by honoring the new king and his councillors with precious gifts. According to the *Agni-Purana:* "A king should treat a prisoner of war, ransomed and liberated, as his own begotten son. A defeated enemy should not be fought again, and the victor should maintain and honor the customs and usages of the country newly added to his kingdom."

The rules for the pacification of a conquered territory have been most brilliantly formulated in Kautilya's *Artha-Shastra:* "Having acquired a new territory, he (the conqueror) should cover the enemies' vices with his own virtues, and the enemies' virtues by doubling his own virtues, by strict obesrvance of his own duties, by attending to his works, by bestowing rewards, by remitting taxes, by giving gifts and by bestowing honors. He should follow the friends and leaders of the people. He should adopt the same mode of life, the same dress, language and customs of the people. He should follow the people in their faith, with which they celebrate their national religious and congregational festivals or amusements."

(Extract from contribution to Calcutta University Magazine.)

In connection with Professor Bal Krishna's article, it is interesting to note certain ancient passages bearing on the same subject. The *Agni- Purana* declares: "The king should protect his own army and worship the guardian deities of the places occupied by it in the enemy's domain, and should take special care in order that they may not be in the least insulted by an infuriated soldiery; or that their temples or the properties dedicated to their enjoyment be in the least molested in any way." Manu and the ancient authorities clearly forbid the confiscation or wilful destruc-

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tion of the property of hostile subjects; and a study of the Law Codes of ancient India makes plain that the chief object of war was not to extend the territory of the conquerors by annexation, or to enrich the conquering army, but to re-establish certain lawful rights. In the Ramayana, when Rama overpowers Ravana, not a single member of the victorious army was allowed to enter the capitol of Lanka; and when even Rama himself sends a messenger, he charges him to gain the permission of Bibishana, Ravana's brother, before proceeding on his way. In the *Shanti-Parva* we read: "Brihaspati has said that a king possessed of intelligence should always avoid war for the acquisition of territory." And this is corroborated by Arrian: "A sense of justice, they say, prevented any Indian king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India."

Megasthenes, Greek ambassador to the court of the Hindu ruler, Chandra-Gupta (319 B. C.), thus testifies to the high standard of morality prevailing among the Indo-Aryans: "There are usages observed by the Indians which contribute to prevent the recurrence of famine among them; for wherever among other nations it is usual in the contests of war to ravage the soil and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste; among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom husbandmen are regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when a battle is raging in their neighborhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger; for the combatants on either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested. Besides, they neither ravage an enemy's land with fire, nor cut down its trees. Nor would an enemy, coming upon a husbandman at work on his land, do him harm; for the men of his class being regarded as public benefactors, are protected from all injury."

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NINTH ANNIVERSARY

of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.

The Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated the Ninth Anniversary of its establishment on the evening of January 1st. Despite the bitterly cold weather nearly one hundred friends were present. The exercises began with a song, delightfully rendered, by Senor Blanchart. Swami Paramananda then rose and delivered an opening address, in which he said:

"We have gathered here this evening to celebrate the Ninth Anniversary of this work. The birth of an individual is always sacred; but the birth of an institution, which exists for the sake of many and for the upliftment of many, is doubly sacred. There is no doubt that the whole world is passing through a bitter crisis, and more than ever does it stand in need of a spiritualizing influence. Never has there been a greater necessity for understanding and unity, and these are the fundamental ideals of the Centre. Its object is not only to create unity between East and West, but between nation and nation, race and race, man and man, even where there is no apparent basis of sympathy or harmony. It recognizes before all else the common heritage of all living beings as related to the One Supreme Cosmic Being. This work has been established, not to introduce a new creed or to enter into rivalry with existing creeds, but to provide a place of non-sectarian worship where the followers of all creeds may find peace and spiritual blessing. When I first came to Boston I did not dream of establishing a permanent work here; I came because I had something in my heart, the same thing which had brought me all the way from India,—an earnest desire to share with others the message of love, unity and tolerance which lies at the root of all Vedanta teaching; for what

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I voice is not personal, it is what India has voiced from time immemorial.

"We are now beginning the tenth season of our work, so we have come together to ask anew the Grace of God and the good will of people. If the work has gained strength, it is because of the desire and sincerity of you, the friends and students of the Centre, who come here so faithfully — not because you find a new religion, but rather because you gain a more comprehensive and unifying presentation of already familiar truths. The Centre does not lay claim to any monopoly of Truth; what it is trying to do is to give its share to humanity at large. Our work may be humble, but what we stand for is of God. We try to represent the Universal Spirit, which recognizes no race or creed. What we stand for is absence of sectarian hatred, absence of creed-bound prejudice. The inscription on this altar—"Truth is one, men call It by various names" —this is the spirit we hold close to our hearts, and this is the spirit we would give to others. We have no thought to make people embrace an alien faith; our sole effort is to make them feel the value and joy of true spiritual living. No one can ever hope to accomplish anything great without spiritual strength and spontaneity of heart. We celebrate this Anniversary every year to remind ourselves of our duty. Are we lacking in any way in the work we have undertaken? Have we ever failed to sound the note of tolerance and love? If so, you must tell us."

At the close of his address, the Swami called upon Sister Devamata to give a review of the year's work. "In the Indian Sacred Writings," she began, "we are given a picture of the great Sankara as a youth of sixteen, seated beneath a tree by the roadside; a white-haired disciple approaches and asks certain questions. The teacher re-

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mains silent, yet after a time the aged man rises and goes on his way with all his questions answered. So must it be in a measure when one is asked to review a spiritual work. In the silence alone can the record be found. For who knows where the Spirit goes? Who knows what the Spirit does? We stand here as a Centre, but we can tell nothing of the ever-widening circles that are being drawn around it. One earnest seeker may come; and the thought impinging on his or her heart may give a new impetus to another, and so on and on. The surface activity represents the smallest part of the work; yet of that only can we take definite account. During the past year the Boston Centre has gone steadily on despite the difficult conditions which prevail everywhere. The Services and Classes have continued without interruption and the average attendance has been maintained — being somewhat higher than usual through the summer. Swami Paramananda has divided his time equally between Los Angeles and Boston, having spent six months at each Centre. The Los Angeles work, as you know, was definitely established in 1916. The Swami had given a previous course of lectures there in August, 1915, during his first journey to the Pacific Coast; this had led under urgent pressure to a second visit the following summer, which culminated in the formation of a Centre. The Swami spent the early part of 1917 in Los Angeles; and after his return to Boston in March our secretary, Miss Sherwood, was left in charge until I was sent at the end of April. A course of nine public lectures with bi-weekly classes held me there until the close of June.

"Swami returned to the West in July and began a series of public lectures, besides the usual bi-weekly classes, which carried him through October. He had gone with the thought of discontinuing the work for a time at

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least, but at all the meetings the attendance was so large and the enthusiasm so great that he was obliged to abandon the idea. 'It does not seem right to throw all this earnest interest away,' he wrote. Besides the regular teaching, he was invited to speak before various organizations and to deliver a course of three lectures in San Diego. Also here in Boston and elsewhere there have been calls for outside lectures.

"The usual season in Washington last spring was reduced to nine days because of my long journey to Los Angeles; but during that time three public lectures and three classes were given and the days were filled with private interviews. The growth in interest surprised everyone; for the seating capacity of the hall was not only taxed to the utmost at the public meetings, but a number were content to stand throughout the lectures. Another branch of the Boston Centre, in Geneva, established by the Swami prior to the outbreak of the war, also continues its regular weekly meetings under the direction of the students.

"Existing abnormal conditions have seriously affected publishers and book-dealers everywhere, so it could not be expected that our publication department should not feel it. People are too deeply absorbed in the book of life to have much interest in the printed page. If they turn to it, it is only to find a key to the larger book. That Vedanta has offered a satisfactory commentary on it for some at least is proved by the fact that 2000 copies of our publications have gone into circulation through the year. We have likewise brought out three new booklets and two new editions of previously published books, making a total production of 4500 copies. Besides this, our monthly publication, "The Message of the East," which is now beginning its seventh volume, has carried the teaching to

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many distant points in Europe and in India, as well as in this country."

After the Report, Senorita Blanchart sang with great artistic charm. Then the Swami spoke again, telling something more of his work in Europe and in the West. In conclusion he called upon all those present to join him in a prayer for the welfare, not only of the Centre, but of all mankind. A duet by Senor and Senorita Blanchart followed, after which the exercises were closed by a benediction. A new booklet containing a brief history of the work and an explanation of Vedanta was then presented to each of the guests. Refreshments were served and the rest of the evening was passed in social intercourse interspersed with music and informal speeches. Dr. Coomaraswamy, who has been appointed curator of the Indian department at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, told something of the valuable collections under his care; while Mrs. Adams paid a hearty tribute to the teaching of the Centre by telling how it had broadened and ripened her understanding in all branches of thought.

The Boston Centre has published another valuable booklet, entitled "Self-Mastery." It contains three lectures by Swami Paramananda on "Self-Conquest," "How to Conserve our Energies," and "Self-Help and Self-Surrender." This is the fourth in a series of small volumes which the Swami is bringing out to give in clear and concise form the salient points of the principles and practice of the Vedanta teaching. The previous booklets were: "Universal Ideal of Religion," "Problem of Life and Death," "Concentration and Illumination." The present one will prove of especially practical help because it deals with the problems which confront those who are thrown out into active life in the world. *(Self-Mastery. Paper, 25 cents. Post. 2cts.)*

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

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The Message of the East

OCTOBER 1918

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NOTICE

With the present number THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST completes its eighth volume. We earnestly request all subscribers to renew their subscriptions promptly. That the Message each month carries new strength and inspiration to many hearts is proved by the frequent expressions of appreciation and gratitude which reach us. We hope therefore that all who have learned to value the magazine will do their utmost to lend it their loyal support, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of all who may gain new light and courage through it.

During the coming year the subscription will be $1.25.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE EXALTED LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

There are many Sacred Writings and Sayings in many different languages, but the same note sounds through all, whether of ancient time or of recent date; for the human heart beats everywhere in the same rhythm. Men may differ and do differ in their human interests and views; but when we are fortunate to catch the deeper note of life, little difference remains; for there in the depths we all live in Him, move in Him and have our being in Him, as St. Paul says.

Spiritual ideals vary and must vary. According to our mental development each of us evolves his own Ideal. Also our conception of God grows as we grow. We make our picture of Divinity according to the degree of our mental penetration. Religion is not in dogmatic beliefs or in philosophic systems. It comes from the Soul. We may begin with very small ideas. Perhaps it is only fear that prompts us to seek God, fear without any element of love or devotion in it. We may have no thought higher than self-preservation. But as we come nearer to God, we transcend this; because we find there is no need to fear. Thus gradually we pass from the more primitive ideals to the loftiest conceptions of God and the spiritual life.

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At the outset we may be inclined to dispute and try to uphold our own Ideal by denouncing others; but this exclusive attitude cannot continue when we experience directly the immensity of God. As the bee ceases to buzz when it enters the flower to suck the honey, so we grow silent when we draw close to the Divine realm. The noise of discussion goes on only before we have crossed the threshold. When the heart is transformed by contact with God, it makes little difference whether it is a Christian heart or a Hindu heart; the same universal love and sympathy fill it full. As soon as we give up theory and begin to practise, there comes a broader understanding and we see everything in a new light; but this requires strength—the strength of earnest and sincere devotion.

A simple, prayerful attitude and steadfast devotion help us more in our practical spiritual life than any amount of argument or intellectual study. We can never fathom the Fathomless Being unless He reveals Himself to us; and this revelation comes to us not through any external means, but as the result of our own state of heart and mind. It is not enough to follow some religious form outwardly. This will not bring devotion; our innermost feelings must be offered to God. No loud prayer is necessary; one thing alone is essential—that our prayer come from the depth of our heart. It must be deep and it must be spontaneous.

Also our mind must be free from doubt and despondency. Trustfulness in our attitude towards the Supreme is the saving grace. Without it we may try to fortify ourselves at every point and even imagine ourselves to be invulnerable, yet at some point of weakness we may be struck and overthrown. The safest thing we can do is to cultivate, with all humility and love, a sense of the presence of the Divine. In no other way can we become strong; and we are

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always cowards when we lack in spiritual strength. Those who can go through the hardest trials and come out without scepticism, they are the true devotees. We see this manifested in the lives of the great saints; but we too can cultivate the same spirit. We are all children of the one Supreme Being, why should we not all have equal access to Him? We have; but we ourselves block the channel. There are moments when we feel that we can really approach Him and worship Him worthily, then that sense of nearness goes. The aim of the spiritual life is to make those moments constant.

We must never go anywhere without carrying the light of the Ideal in our hand. We must make ourselves so in accord with the Cosmic Being that we can be led absolutely by Him. When we have the sense of actual relationship, we cease to be anxious and fearful. Our greatest security is when we feel that we are with God, and our greatest duty is to keep close to Him. Without a definite spiritual Ideal our life is like a boat tossed by strong winds, often losing its course and unable to hold against the current. Many unexpected things come upon us; and unless we have a firm spiritual conviction, we shall always feel adrift. But when beneath our ordinary consciousness there flows an unbroken consciousness of God, then we are able to meet all conditions bravely.

No life can be complete without happiness, and there can never be any real joy on the outside unless the spirit within is rejoicing. This is the lesson of every religious feast and especially of the birthdays of the Great Saviours. We cannot have the Christmas spirit unless we have joy. The Soul must feel the presence of the Christ within and delight in that presence. It is easy to exchange material gifts; but what is the true gift? Love, forgiveness, toler-

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ance, all-embracing sympathy. Christ is born of love, and only as our life becomes filled with the elements of love and light can we be called His followers. These two go together; because love always makes the path clear and throws the light of understanding across it. The Christ spirit is ever living. It rises again and again in our Soul. It never dies except through our ignorance. When we begin to doubt or deny what is most sacred in our life, the reality of God and of our relation to Him, we shut ourselves off from the source of light and cheat ourselves of the greatest blessing.

Every being is a living altar of God; and if we do not feel His presence, we lead a life of blindness and do things which are unworthy of our higher nature. To unite this ordinary external life with the inner spiritual life is the chief aim of all the Great Teachers. Actually God is the nearest of all things, yet we feel a vast difference between Him and ourselves. This is because we make life so complex and attach too much importance to every little experience. But some day our eyes will be opened and we shall see how small is human attainment, even the greatest, compared with the larger realities. Then we shall be ashamed to have dreamed such vacant egotistic dreams and we shall realize the true significance of life.

Religion is the highest activity of man; not formal religion, but true devotional aspiration and actual experiencing. Nothing can stand between us and Godhead except our own self. Often we think there is no light to reveal Him, but in reality we stand in our own light. The shadow is cast by our own ego and selfishness. Worldly wisdom bars our progress. What we need is to put in its place spiritual wisdom; and our spiritual wisdom depends largely on the atmosphere we are able to create by our acts and

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thoughts. This is why sometimes we feel the presence of the Deity and sometimes the access is wholly blocked. Our heart must be tranquil and free from unworthy feelings, such as hatred, enmity, anything that creates disturbance. There is no doubt that the external environment helps also—a holy atmosphere or association with lofty souls; but these cannot really help unless the mind is right. The outer condition we can transcend; but the inner condition is very difficult to transcend, because it deals with our own mind. How hard we have to struggle often to forget something which has disturbed us! For that reason the spiritual life is an inner thing. It is not a matter of books or of study. It is a matter of purifying our thoughts. We must fill our hearts so full of trust and spiritual yearning, that we can go to God as we would go to an earthly mother or father. Those who can thus create a real relation with Him, become like living shrines. Then there is not so much need to go to church, because we carry our own altar and our own holy atmosphere with us. This is the way we make our spiritual Ideal a tangible reality.

The world is changeable; that is the reason why we should establish our life in God, Who never changes or fails. He loves us, not because we love Him, but because His nature is love. And when we can offer our thoughts and prayers and acts to Him, not because we want something of Him, but because we find our joy in Him and long to lose ourselves in Him, then our life will overflow in blessing. To forget ourself wholly in an ecstasy of love, this is the way to learn to love even our enemies. A saint does not love this one because he is pleasing or good, and hate that one because he is unsympathetic or bad. He loves everyone alike. His whole being radiates love. Love alone is the motive power in all his thoughts, words and actions;

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feelings of hatred or jealousy or envy are wholly alien to his nature and can find no place in his heart.

The only way to reach this exalted state is by giving all. When we become united with the Storehouse of all blessing, we have no fear of lack and we give freely, asking nothing. We must realize that we are direct descendants of the All-loving One. When our life and thought are in perfect harmony with His higher spiritual laws, then will it be natural to us to depend upon Him and be unceasingly conscious of Him. But this will come only when our whole heart is dedicated with child-like simplicity, humility and devotion to that All-Compassionate Deity.

May He awaken in our hearts such true yearning and earnestness that we may know how to seek and find His Presence within us! May He fill us with His Divine Wisdom, and destroy all our ignorance and selfishness! He alone can give us strength and understanding. He alone can reveal Himself unto us, for by no other light can we perceive Him. He is the one Lord, the one Resting-place of the universe, the one unchanging Reality, the Bestower of all blessings. Let us turn our whole being to Him. Let us lift our thought to Him in constant supplication. Let our prayer be:

O Thou All-effulgent, All-pervading Spirit! Manifest Thy Infinite Glory in our hearts! We seek our rest and refuge in Thee. We seek our strength and inspiration from Thee. Forgive us all our weakness and lead us by the right path. O Thou Infinite Being, embodiment of all love and compassion, fill our hearts with love that knows no hate and a compassion that forgives all things. So mould our life that we may live with Thee and be instruments in Thy hands. Make us worthy by giving us Thy support. Grant unto us Thy loving blessings and keep us ever in peace.

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ANCIENT INVOCATIONS AND PRAYERS

BUDDHIST PRAYER

Let all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

Let all creatures everywhere, all spirits, and all who have taken birth—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

Let all women and all men, all Aryans and non-Aryans, all gods and all men, and they that have fallen into lower spheres of life—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

In the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

ZOROASTRIAN PRAYER

I believe Thee to be the best Being of all, the Source of light for the world. Everybody shall choose Thee as the source of light; Thee, Thee, holiest Spirit Mazda! Mayest Thou grant me the Truth and tell me the best to be done.

That I will ask Thee, tell me it right, Thou living God! Who was in the beginning the father and creator of Truth? Who made the sun and stars the way? Who causes the moon to increase and wane, if not Thou?

Tell me good things to perform, the duties which are enjoined by Thyself, Thou Wise One! Those things which are communicated for the welfare of all beings by the Good Mind. What good, intended for the increase of life, is to be had, that may come to me? Instruct me aright in the faith which, being the best of all, may produce every

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good thing, by means of words and actions. My heart wishes that I may know Thee, Thou Wise One.

FROM THE CHALDEAN LITURGY

Merciful One, begotten of the universe, Who founds His illustrious seat among living creatures.

Long-suffering Father, full of forgiveness, Whose hands uphold the lives of mankind.

Lord, Thy Divinity is as wide as the heavens and fills the sea with fear. . . .

In heaven who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme.

On earth who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme.

ASSYRIAN INVOCATION

Thou art the Powerful One. Thou art the Life-giver. Thou also art the Prosperer. Merciful One among the gods; eldest Son of Him who made heaven and earth. Lord of heaven and earth, no equal hast Thou. Merciful One, Who the dead to life raiseth.

HINDU PRAYER

O merciful God! I have always been and ever shall be Thy servant, and Thou hast been and ever will be my Lord. Whether Thou art pleased with me or not, I have none to look to except Thee.

There is none who is so patient as Thou in bearing with my shortcomings; and there is none here, O Lord, so unworthy as I of Thy mercy. O Lord of the worlds! I am, as Thou knowest, Thine eternal servant; I belong wholly unto Thee. Of whom then, O Upholder of the universe, shall I be afraid? To whom else shall I look for blessings?

What is impossible to Thee, O Eternal Father, Who art the Lord of all and possessor of all things? What I may ask of Thee counts as nothing compared with what Thou canst grant. O Master of all worlds, Most Merciful One, if Thou art not gracious and kind to me, where can I find a refuge?

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Thou art the only Protector of the worlds. Thou art the great Bestower of good. Thou art the All-knowing and the All-kind. Who beside Thee can gratify our desires? Countless are Thy gifts; and equally just art Thou to all. Therefore, O Lord, Ruler of the universe, Possessor of all riches, have mercy upon me.

Knowing that Thou art the Friend of the poor and the distressed, I surrender myself wholly unto Thee. Protect me, O Lord; and bestow on me what Thou deemest fit. Thy will be done, O Lord of the universe. Thou art the Helper of the needy, Thou art the Fountain of all mercy. Thou art the Guide and Friend to all, and the real Support of those in affliction. Therefore, O Lord, I crave Thy Divine mercy; save me that I may not perish in the ocean of this world of birth and death.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Sermon by John Tauler

(A Mystic of Strassburg, 14th Century)

Our Lord says here that the kingdom of God is nigh to us. Yea, the kingdom of God is in us; and St. Paul says, that now is our salvation nearer to us than we believe. Now ye ought to know, first, *how* the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; secondly, *when* the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

We must give earnest heed to take note of all that is contained in these words, "The kingdom of God is nigh at hand." For if I were king and did not know it, I should be no king; but if I were fully convinced that I was a king and if all men deemed me so likewise; and further, if I knew that all men deemed me such, I should be a king, and all the riches of the king would be mine. But if any of these three things were wanting, I could be no king. In

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like manner does our blessedness depend upon our perceiving and knowing the Highest Good, which is God Himself.

I have a power in my Soul which enables me to perceive God. I am as certain as that I live that nothing is so near to me as God. He is nearer to me than I am to myself. It is a part of His very essence that He should be nigh and present to me. He is also nigh to a stone or a tree, but they do not know it. If a tree could know God and perceive His presence as the highest of the angels perceives it, the tree would be as blessed as the highest angel. And it is because man is capable of perceiving God and knowing how nigh God is to him, that he is better off than a tree. And he is more blessed or less blessed in the same measure as he is aware of the presence of God. It is not because God is in him and so close to him, and that he hath God, that he is blessed; but because he perceives God's presence and knows and loves Him; and such an one will feel that God's kingdom is nigh at hand.

Often, when I meditate on the kingdom of God, I cannot speak for the greatness thereof. For the kingdom of God, what is it but God Himself with all His riches? The kingdom of God is no small thing. If we think of all the worlds that God could create, that is not the kingdom of God. When the kingdom of God is manifested in a Soul, and she knows it, you need not to preach or to teach; for that Soul is taught of God, and assured of eternal life. He who knows and perceives how nigh God's kingdom is, may say with Jacob: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."

A Master has said: "He knoweth God aright who knoweth Him in all things alike." He who serveth God with fear, it is good; he who serveth Him with love, it is better;

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but he who in fear can love, that is the best of all. That a man should have a life of quiet or rest in God is good; that a man should lead a painful life in patience is better; but that a man should have rest in a painful life is best of all. Whether a man walk out in the fields and say his prayers, and feel God's presence, or whether he be in the church and feel God's presence, does he perceive him any the better because he is in a place of rest? If he do, it comes from his own infirmity; the difference is not on God's side; for God is in all things and places alike, and is ever alike ready to give Himself to us, in so far as we are able to receive Him; and he knows God alike who sees Him in all things.

St. Bernard says: "Why does my eye perceive the heavens, and not my feet? Because my eye is more like the heavens than my feet." Thus, if my Soul is to perceive God, it must be heavenly. Now what will bring the Soul to see God in herself and know how nigh God is to her? Consider! The heavens cannot take any imprint from other things; neither can they, by any violence or force, be turned from their order. In like manner, the Soul that would know God must be so grounded and built up in Him, that neither hope, nor fear, nor joy, nor sorrow, nor weal or woe, nor anything else, can so move it as to force it from its place in Him.

Nothing hinders the Soul so much in its knowledge of God as time and place. Time and place are parts, and God is one; therefore, if our Soul is to know God, it must know Him above time and place; for God is neither this nor that, like these complex things around us, for God is one. If the Soul is to see, she must not look at the things that exist in time; for so long as she is looking at time and place, or at the phenomena dependent thereon, she can never

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perceive God Himself; just as, if mine eye is to perceive color, it must first be cleared of all tint in itself. I say more: if the Soul is to know God, she must forget herself and lose herself, for while she is looking at and thinking about herself, she is not looking at and thinking about God; but when she loses herself in God and lets go of all things, then she finds herself again in God.

When she comes to know God, then does she know to perfection in Him, both herself and all the things from which she has separated herself. If I am truly to know the Highest Good, or the Eternal Goodness, I must know it in that wherein it is good, namely, in itself,—not in these things in which it is only in part. If I am to know real Being, I must know it in that where it is self-existent, that is, in God. In God alone is the Divine Substance. In one man you have not all humanity, for one man is not all men; but in God the Soul knows all humanity and all things in their ideal, for she knows them in their substance. So I am as certain as that I live and God lives, that if the Soul is to know God, she must know Him above time and space; and such a Soul knows God, and knows how nigh God's kingdom is; that is, God with all His riches.

The masters have set forth many questions in the schools as to how it be possible for the Soul to know God. It is not of God's severity that he requires much from man; it is of His great kindness that he will have the Soul to open herself wider, to be able to receive much, that He may bestow much upon her. Let no one think that is is hard to attain thereunto. Although it sounds hard and is hard at first, as touching the forsaking and dying to all things; yet, when one has reached this state, no life can be easier or sweeter, or fuller of pleasures; for God is right diligent to be with us at all seasons and to teach us, that He may

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bring us to Himself when we are like to go astray. None of us ever desired anything more ardently than God desires to bring men to the knowledge of Himself.

God is ever ready, but we are very unready; God is nigh to us, but we are far from Him; God is within, we are without; God is at home, we are strangers. The Prophet says: "God leadeth the righteous by a narrow path into a broad highway, till they come into a wide and open place;" that is unto the true freedom of that spirit which hath become one spirit with God. God help us all to follow Him, that He may bring us unto Himself! Amen.

LOVING JESUS, CANST THOU BE—

By E. C. Adams

Loving Jesus canst Thou be
Human friend to one like me?
Heart's companion have I none
So must go my way alone
Unless, Jesus, Thou canst bend
Thy dear Head to be my friend.

Nearly all my hours must go
Into toilsome work, and so
I'll not need to trouble Thee
Through the day to comfort me.
But when evening follows day
And the tired mind longs for play,

When the weary heart craves rest
Near the one that loves it best,
Yearning sore for cheer that lies
Warm in answering human eyes,
Then, dear Jesus, canst Thou be
Just a play-time friend to me?

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THE NEED OF A MEDIATOR

By Sister Devamata

In all religious aspiration and struggle two clearly-defined aims are apparent:—one, to lift the human into the Divine; the other, to draw the Divine down into the human. The first is the mark of spiritual manhood; the second, of spiritual youth and childhood. Any sense of aloofness chills the child heart and engenders fear and distrust. It longs with an instinctive longing to come into unveiled contact with the hidden Power dimly sensed in the dark beyond; and feeling impotent to travel out into the darkness, it strives age after age to draw that Unseen One down within its reach. Thus it is that invariably we find the awakening of the religious consciousness expressing itself by some attempt to invest Deity with familiar and tangible form.

This, I believe, is the origin of all Nature-worship. It is the effort of man to touch God through the common elements of daily life. Modern thought interprets it as benighted superstition, not considering how keen must be the consciousness of Divinity to be ever mindful of Its presence. How often do we with our boasted enlightenment have any real sense of God as we watch the leaping flame or the growing grain or the bubbling mountain stream? "The world which is now divine only to the gifted, was then divine to whosoever would turn his eye upon it," Carlyle writes in his *Hero-Worship*. "The young generations of the world, who had in them the freshness of children, and yet the depth of earnest men, who did not think they had finished off all things in Heaven and Earth by merely giving them scientific names, but had to gaze direct at them there with awe and wonder; they felt better what of divinity is in man and Nature."

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No one ever worshipped Fire or Wind or Water for itself. It was the Nameless Power within them which called forth the invocation or sacrifice:—to propitiate when that Power raged over the earth in flood or storm or conflagration; to adore in childlike wonder when It came in the gentler aspects of the hearth-fire, the sacred river or the fertile furrow. To those early seekers there was nothing strange in the fact that Satyakama should hear the voice in the fire teaching him, as is told in the Chandogya-Upanishad; or that tree and mountain should answer the Sage pursuing his fleeing son, Sukadeva. On every side that Hidden One was calling to them; and wherever the dividing veil seemed thinnest, there they sought to break through and touch the unseen Presence.

As time went on, however, the lonely hearts of men were not content to leave that Power nameless and formless. A name and form seemed to bring It nearer; so the mighty family of gods sprang into existence—sons and daughters of the Great Mother, Nature. Agni, Vayu, Indra, Surya (gods of fire, wind, storm and sun) of the Vedic Aryans: Loke, Aegir, Thor, of the Norsemen: Helios, Hera, Poseidon, Zeus, of the Greeks: Gibil, Ea, Samas (fire, sea and sun gods), of the ancient Chaldeans: all point to a common parentage. But these deities are never more than messengers or intermediaries of a Being beyond. Even in that oldest Scripture, the Rig-Veda, we find an unmistakable recognition of the One, Whose emissaries these Bright Spirits are, dispensing wealth or learning, success or long life, according to the special prayer of the deserving worshipper. They are invariably looked upon as minor aspects of Deity, near enough to the mortal plane to be willing to satisfy mortal desires. "Those who long for success in the world worship the gods," the Bhagavad-Gita

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tells us; and Homer says: "All folk yearn after the gods." The Gita adds, however, that whatever the form of Deity man may worship to gain his end, from the Supreme alone comes the satisfaction of his desire.

So long as fear or material gratification—sons, cattle, victory in arms or abundant harvests—furnished the chief impetus to religious effort, Nature and the gods remained the mediators between Divinity and man. But as fear softened into love, and desire for earthly benefactions changed into hunger for spiritual blessing, even these seemed too far removed from the human need. Man's soul cried out for a closer companion—a personal mediator or intercessor. So in every religion there appears the Saviour, who is known as "Redeemer," "Slain One," "Sin-Bearer," "Only-begotten Son," "Anointed One"; by all the names, in fact, which are usually regarded in the Occident as peculiarly Christian. Prometheus was called a "crucified Saviour" and a "Divine Sufferer." Hermes was invoked as the "good Saviour," also Apollo and Aesculapius. On an ancient statue of Bacchus, who is frequently spoken of as Saviour and Redeemer, we read the inscription: "It is I who guides you; it is I who protects you and who saves you; I who am Alpha and Omega." The Persians looked upon Mithras as a "Divine Mediator"; Horus, the Son of Isis, was worshipped as the Divine Saviour of the Egyptians, as was also his father Osiris; while Fo-hi was declared to be a Saviour by the Chinese.

The idea of the *Logos* is equally universal. The Indo-Aryan had it under the form of the *Sabda-Brahman* or "Sound-God." The Chaldeans claimed their *Memra* or "Word of God;" and to the Assyrian the Saviour Marduk was the "Word." An ancient Egyptian record relates how Thulis, a great monarch of Egypt, one day asked the

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oracle of Serapis: "Tell me if there was before one greater than I, or will ever be one greater?" To which the oracle made answer: "First God, afterward the Word, and with them the Holy Spirit: all these are of the same nature and make one whole, of which the power is eternal. Go away quickly, mortal, thou who hast but an uncertain life." In early church history again we find the Christian Father, Justin Martyr, asking the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius why the followers of Jesus should be so persecuted, "considering," he adds, "that you have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Word and Messenger of God." The *Logos* also figures prominently in the philosophical teaching at Alexandria during the last years of the pre-Christian era. Philo, the most eminent of this School, addresses it as a distinct being, calling it "Interpreter of God," "Eternal Bread of Heaven," "Ambassador of God," "Mediator," "Intercessor," "First-Begotten Son of God."

With the Saviour or *Logos* in these more deific forms, however, the line of intercession does not close. Nearer still stand the incarnate Ones, the "Word made flesh"—Krishna, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ; true God-men, radiant with Divinity on the one side, humbly human on the other. It would seem that the effort to humanize the Divine must culminate with these embodied representatives of Godhead; yet in every form of religion the intimacy of relationship is pushed one step further. The Son intercedes with the Father, but the Mother is invoked to intercede with the Son. Thus wherever we find a Saviour proclaimed, with it springs up the adoration of the Virgin Mother. In Egypt the worship of Isis with the child Horus in her arms dates back at least six thousand years; and like the Greek "Virgin Queen of Heaven," Juno, and the Virgin Mary, she was depicted as standing on the crescent moon.

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The ancient Scandinavians had their Madonna; and the ancient Germans worshipped a virgin goddess Hertha, who conceived of the "active spirit" and gave birth to a son. In Mexico is to be seen a hieroglyphic showing the annunciation of the Virgin Chimalman, who was told by the ambassador of God that she should become the mother of the Saviour Quetzalcoatl. In Gaul the Druids invoked the *Virgo-Paritura* as the "Mother of God"; while the ancient Muscovites bowed before a sacred family consisting of mother and child with another child standing beside her, as we see John the Baptist beside the Christian Madonna. India, Persia, China, all had their Blessed Virgin Mothers; and everywhere names and customs and dates associated with this worship of Divine Motherhood are strangely identical.

These multiple proofs, however, of the unanimity of human minds, whatever the race or creed, should not weaken our belief in the reality and Divine sanctity of any Saviour or any special form of religious worship. Rather should they make our faith the stronger. In science isolated phenomena contribute little toward the establishment of Truth; it is the continually repeated fact which confirms the law. Why should it be otherwise in religion? If God had come only once and to a portion only of the human race, if the religious consciousness had expressed itself once only in certain forms and symbols, we might doubt the authenticity of the records or the correctness of our interpretation of them. But when the higher needs of man are met again and again and still again in the same way, then we may safely believe that the Mediator is a fundamental fact of life; and that the symbols and prayers and rituals, which reproduce themselves in East and West, North and South, are the natural and spontaneous expres-

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sions of religious aspiration among all peoples; just as men everywhere have given expression to their physical needs in closely-related material forms.

The recognition of this fact also may help to stay the iconoclastic spirit of the scientific reformer and image-breaker, who would make religion only for mature minds. The wise spiritual leader is he who recognizes that in the primary grade of the church, as of the school-room, the object lesson is necessary; and the child in spiritual evolution will remain Godless, if he cannot have a God nearly related to his human consciousness. As long as the Supreme Being seems far away, the distance must be filled with mediating manifestations of Divinity; and the greater the distance seems, the longer will grow the line of intercession. Semitic peoples filled it with their angels, archangels and heavenly hosts; the Indo-Aryans with their *devas, ghandarvas,* and *pitris;* Greeks and Romans with their gods, demi-gods and deified heroes.

It is useless to try to clear the space. Sweep away these intervening entities in one form and the human heart will bring them back clothed in new names and forms. Buddha, as we know, preached an impersonal and isolated Deity. His adherents fashioned a concrete God of Him, and to provide a sense of duration, propounded the idea that Boddhisattwas are perpetually taking form. Mohammed turned the eyes of the Sabeans away from their sacred stars and cast out the gods of the Arabs; but his own revelation, he claimed, was received from the angel Gabriel.

Never by creating an empty void between God and man, can we bring the human nearer to the Divine. Theology may decide that no mediatory entities shall stand between, but the human heart will reach its own decision by an inner intuition bred of a far-stretching evolutionary memory. It

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sees unbroken continuity throughout Nature; every grade of life manifesting itself in some form; no break anywhere from amoeba up to man. Why should the chain be broken at this midway point, it asks, and the Soul be called upon to take a sudden leap across the wide chasm dividing humanity from Divinity? Let it rather bridge the chasm with any higher mediating influence that may awaken its faith and reverence. Communion with the saints, loyal devotion to an Incarnate Saviour, companionship with the holy of heaven or earth, these are all divinely appointed means by which the yearning heart of man may find the God without and learn to pass to the God within.

THE SIGHT OF THE BLIND

Mediaeval Legend of the Blessed Virgin

In the city of Roc Amadour there was an abbey-church dedicated to Our Lady, which had become a chosen place of pilgrimage because of the miracles wrought therein. At a day's journey thence there lived a gentlewoman, who through a life of vanity and the misuse of her eyes in gazing ever at worldly glitter rather than at God's glory, had been deprived of her sight. Finding herself in darkness, repentance seized upon her heart, and she vowed herself wholly to the Blessed Mary, if only that loving Mother in Her infinite pity would give her back the light.

Counselled by the priest of her township, she determined to make a pilgrimage on foot to the abbey-church at Roc Amadour and at the shrine of the Virgin repeat her vow. With her went a large concourse of her neighbors, grieving that she should be thus afflicted and eager that she might find redress. So together they journeyed, at times right wearily, for the way seemed long, until they reached the hilltop of Mont Joye, where the church of miracles

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could first be seen. There they fell upon their knees and all together repeated the *Salve Regina* and *Ave Maria*. When the lady who was blind heard that they were near the end of their pilgrimage, she began to weep bitterly and, throwing herself upon the ground, prayed thus to the All-forgiving Mother:

"Sweet and most piteous Lady! I implore you by your holy name and that of your dear Son, that did show compassion to the blind and healed them, look with mercy on this poor sinner, sad and sore afflicted. I know full well, Most Gracious Mother, that if you will but hear my prayer, I may once more see the light. I entreat you, Blessed Lady, give me back my sight, and I do promise you that from this day I shall vow myself to a holy life and do all things according to your good pleasure."

Scarcely had she spoken these humble words of penitence, when the veil of darkness lifted and she saw more clearly than ever in her life before. Then she began to cry in a joyous voice: "Dear Mother, Queen of Heaven, I see! I see! All glory and thanks be unto you, for I know that by no grace of mine have you thus shown me favor." And with eyes fixed in devout fervor on the distant church of Roc Amadour, she sang: "Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium" ("I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help").

All the neighbors, seeing the miracle, began to weep for very joy and ran along the way to tell of it to other pilgrims. So did they go, all praising with one accord the Holy Mother of God, who had thus restored sight to the blind. When, however, they reached the door of the church and the gentlewoman thought to enter, she could not cross the threshold; nor could any other, even the strongest, draw her over. So they called the priests, who said that,

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though penitent, yet had she not been shriven; and for this reason was she kept without the House of God. So one, wise and zealous, came in his surplice to hear her confession; and she told in deep humility, word for word, all that she had done to gratify the vanity of her heart and accomplish her own pleasure in the world. Then the priest, looking upon her and seeing how comely was she and how great might be her temptation once again to mislead by giving before His altar."

"My dear sister, I fear me that by these fair tresses you have done much hurt to other souls, and they may yet be to you a snare of the enemy. It is meet now that you be rather adorned with modesty and humility. I admonish you, therefore, if you would be absolved of your sins, that you let yourself be shorn of these fair locks and make them an offering at the Blessed Virgin's shrine. Then will you be delivered of all chance to vanity and you will see not only with these eyes of the body, but also with the eyes of the Soul. If you consent to this, then shall you be able to enter God's House and make your act of thanksgiving before His altar.

Fearing lest the blindness might once more come upon her, the gentlewoman submitted, though right unwillingly, to the penance laid upon her. She knew full well that these golden waving tresses were her chief beauty; and as she carried them in her hand to the Holy Virgin's shrine, a secret displeasure rose within her, so that with her prayer was mingled a sense of bitterness that Saint Mary should have sold her favor at the cost of so dear a sacrifice.

Having finished their devotions, the pilgrims set out on their homeward way, singing and giving thanks for the great mercy of the Blessed Mary; but the gentlewoman

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joined but coldly in their rejoicings. At Mont Joye again they paused, facing Roc Amadour, and knelt to repeat a last *Ave Maria*, as a loving farewell to Our Lady. But this gentlewoman instead cried in a loud voice:

"Alas, Holy Saint Mary, what have you done to me? I came to you adorned with great beauty, and you have robbed me of what was my dearest treasure. My heart grieves for those tresses that you have taken from me and I return home disconsolate and sorrowful."

As she prayed, behold! there came upon her head the golden curling tresses which had been shorn and laid before the Virgin; but her eyes were blind so that she could not see them. Her neighbors led her home, amazed and wondering. But from that hour prayers and pilgrimages profited her nothing. To the end she remained in darkness; and all who heard her story learned that it availeth little to restore the sight of the eyes when there is blindness in the Soul.

REPORT

During the past month all Services and classes continued as usual at the Centre, except on Tuesday, November 12th, when a thanksgiving Service was substituted for the usual class. After music and meditation the Swami spoke with deep feeling of the reestablishment of peace in the world: "The conflict has ceased," he said, "and what is the lesson we have learned from it? That no one individual or nation can work for its own happiness; that there cannot be such a thing as selfish happiness. We must feel for one another. Only when we do this can we grasp the real import of such moments as the present one. We pay a very great price when we lose the universal point of view, for it alone gives a death blow to all self-seeking. When both in the small

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and the large facts of life we are able to forget ourselves completely, then whatever we do must prove constructive and fruitful. The soldiers have taught us how to transcend the little things of life. But these transcendent experiences do not come in one way only, and they never come so long as we cherish selfish desires.

"Rejoicing is good, but we must remember that there is no true joy unless our heart is free from hatred. We must never lose our spiritual point of view. In days of sorrow it is natural for us to turn to God, but we must turn to Him with great fervor in days of rejoicing. Indeed, we must pray even more in the hour of joy, that we may keep our balance and hold fast to our Ideal. A time of many changes lies before us. Small groups of people and nations are to be broken apart in order that the world may have a larger feeling and all men work together in a common cause. We must prepare ourselves, then when the hour strikes we shall not fail to do our part. When we have bigger ideals and live in a bigger way, we must also be ready to make bigger sacrifices. We must not be satisfied to live in the same narrow circle. The world is growing and if we do not grow with it, we must suffer. As it outgrows certain things, we too must expand our vision and adapt ourselves to the new conditions. Let us merge our little selfish happiness in a bigger happiness; and when we pray, let our prayer be, not for ourselves, but for all living beings."

There was another special Service on Thanksgiving evening at which the Swami in his address once again expressed deep gratitude for the blessing of returning peace; a peace which, he prayed, might prove lasting and mark the beginning of an era of greater unity and brotherhood among all the peoples of the earth.

The Swami will remain in Boston through December.

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